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CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THOMAS M. MENINO

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OCT 16 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

October 13, 2000

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. CC-00-176 / Application by Verizon for Authorization Under Section 271 to Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas:

As you might expect, the City of Boston is at the center of the current explosion in the information industry in Massachusetts, due to the financial, educational and health industries based here. These market opportunities have generated significant investment by developers, utilities and telecommunications companies, as they attempt to meet demand from residential and commercial demand for information technology.

As mayor, I must consider the interests of both businesses and residents in the city. As such, my administration has encouraged the deployment of competitive communications networks in our city. RCN is currently building a network in Boston and Level 3, MFN, and others are also actively investing to reach our attractive business and consumer markets. I know that under the Telecommunications Act, Verizon had many obligations to open its network to competition as a condition to offering long distance services. Based on our experience in the City of Boston, the company has worked hard to meet those obligations.

I believe that Verizon now should be able to compete in the long distance market. Verizon's entry into long distance will bring more choices and better prices along with combinations of local and long distance services. Consumers in Boston and across the state should have the option of choosing Verizon for their local and long distance services.

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BOSTON CITY HALL • ONE CITY HALL PLAZA • BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS 02201 • 617/635-4000

Verizon's application with the FCC is about giving consumers choice and value by providing real competition in the long distance market. I strongly encourage you to support this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas M. Menino". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "M".

Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston

cc: Senator Kennedy
Senator Kerry
Congressman Moakley



DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL
Florence Paint & Decorating Center, Inc.

4 Depot Street, Florence, MA 01060

413-584-3723

October 11, 2000

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

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OCT 16 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

RE: CC Docket No. CC-00-176 /
Application by Verizon for Authorization under Section 271
To Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas:

I operate a small but growing paint supply company in Florence, Massachusetts. As the FCC reviews Verizon's bid to provide long distance in this state, I wanted to add my perspective as a small business owner and rural consumer to your process.

Since my customers have many choices for their painting supplies, I try to make it easy for them to choose my business over one of the larger chains. I do that by offering personal service and fair prices. I also try to keep it simple and easy for my customer to choose a local supplier.

While most of my customers are local, I use fax, long distance and Internet services to contact suppliers across the country. While I appreciate having many choices for each, I would like to be able to choose the best local supplier (Verizon) for all my telephone services. I've had offers to switch my local phone service to other companies, but have stuck with Verizon because in my estimation, they've earned my business.

Consumers and small businesses like mine will finally see the full benefits of competition when Verizon is allowed to compete for all telephone services. I'd like the ability to choose Verizon for all my home and business services. With us in mind, please approve Verizon's long distance application in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Steve Mongeon
President-Owner

CC: Senator E. Kennedy
Senator J. Kerry
Representative J. Olver
Representative R. Neal

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REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD
OF HAMPDEN COUNTY, INC.

Your Connection to Workforce Development

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OCT 16 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

October 10, 2000

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room Cy-B402
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. CC-00-176 ✓
Application by Verizon for Authorization Under Section 271
To Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas:

Please accept this letter of support for the creation of greater competition in the delivery of long distance telephone services. As our region's primary organization for the coordination of work force development programs, the Regional Employment Board is constantly working to make our local economy more competitive so that companies will grow and create quality jobs. It is clear that the costs of telecommunication services is a key factor in the cost of doing business, and therefore, we need to have the best service at the best price. This is the reason for our support of fair competition. We apply the principles of competition to secure high quality job training options for job seekers and to provide greater customer choice. The results of this competitive approach have resulted in increased program performance and greater customer satisfaction. We believe that the same results will happen in the delivery of telecommunications services when greater competition by more carriers is allowed.

As all businesses, both private and non-profit, grow in dependence on telecommunications and the internet, we need sound public policy that opens the market place to greater competition and to new opportunities for "one-stop shopping." I trust that you will look favorably on such quality applications for the provisions of long distance and related services.

Sincerely,

J. William Ward
Executive Director

cc: Senator Kennedy
Senator Kerry
Congressman Neal
Michael Pequignot, Regional Director Public Affairs, Verizon

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A Division of the October Company

41 O'Neill Street, Easthampton, MA 01027-1103
413-527-7120 1-800-356-3572 FAX: 413-527-7249
E-mail: sales@stik-2.com Web site: www.stik-2.com

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OCT 16 2000

October 11, 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW, Room CY-B402
Washington DC 20554

Re: CC Docket No. CC-00-176 /
Application by Verizon for Authorization under Section 271
To Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

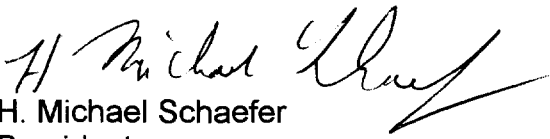
Dear Ms. Salas,

Stik-II Products is a manufacturer of pressure sensitive adhesives that are sold throughout the United States. As a small company, we rely heavily upon communications to remain in contact with our customers. The Internet, telephone, fax and data transfers are regularly used to facilitate sales.

We now are forced to use a mix of providers to get the level of service necessary to grow our business. I believe Verizons entry into the long distance markets to be in the best interests of our company as well as to Massachusetts industry in general.

I ask for favorable consideration of Verizons application to provide long distance service. They have consistently provided a level of service to be admired and I look forward to the day that we can use them for all of our communications needs.

Sincerely,


H. Michael Schaefer
President

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Town of Scituate

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Ralph M. Crossen, Chairman
Shawn Harris
Richard W. Lane
Joseph P. Norton
Susan A. Phippen

October 11, 2000



600 Chief Justice Cushing Highway
Scituate, Massachusetts 02066
781-545-8740
Fax 781-545-8704

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OCT 16 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Ms. Magali Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-B-204
Washington, DC 20554

re: **CC Docket: 00-176, Application by Verizon for Authorization Under Section 271 to Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts**

Dear Ms. Salas:

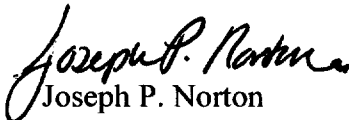
As a public official concerned with fostering the economic well being of my Town and State, and encouraging competitive options available to our residents, I enthusiastically support Verizon's application to provide long distance service in Massachusetts.

Time and time again, I have been impressed with Verizon's responsiveness in providing local telecommunications service to the Town government and to the people we serve. I am confident that the same will be true in the long distance market if the FCC rules favorably on the company's application.

While good corporate citizenship may not be a formal factor in the Commission's deliberation on this matter, I must include a positive reference to the manner in which Verizon and its employees contribute to the social fabric of our region. Verizon is not simply a company doing business in our community - Verizon is an integral part of our community.

Kindly include this expression of support for Verizon as part of the record to be considered by the Commission in this application.

Sincerely,


Joseph P. Norton

Board of Selectmen

JPN:kad

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Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce

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October 6, 2000

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. CC-00-176 ✓
Application by Verizon for Authorization under Section 271
To Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas:

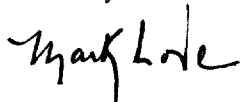
The Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce is the largest chamber of commerce in New England. With 125 years as the voice of the business community, the Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce provides leadership necessary for our city and region to grow and succeed. The Chamber is an advocate and ally for member businesses and works with the community to further economic growth.

Throughout the many industries we serve, we know that vigorous competition is the most effective way of ensuring high quality service at the lowest possible cost. Competition in local telecommunications brings consumers benefits and new advances. We've seen this unfold in Worcester, where a number of new carriers have built fiber-based networks and switches in our city. All of these networks are connected with Verizon's, creating one of the most robust and competitive communications marketplaces in New England. Not only has this helped the Worcester market itself as a communications-friendly destination, we have seen job growth within the industry and those that serve it. Verizon has worked cooperatively with its competitors to make this happen.

On the community side, Verizon has been a partner with the Worcester community on many social and economic development initiatives. We know that Verizon's commitment to all of the residents of Massachusetts, including Worcester consumers, will be maintained and strengthened with its entry as a full-service competitor in Massachusetts.

The Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce strongly urges the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to quickly approve the Verizon application to provide long distance telephone service.

Sincerely,



Mark L. Love
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: Senator Edward M. Kennedy
Senator John F. Kerry
Congressman James P. McGovern

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Saunders Hotel Group

October 12, 2000

Telephone 617.425.0900

Facsimile 617.425.0901

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

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OCT 16 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: CC Docket No. CC-00-176
Application by Verizon for Authorization Under Section 271
To Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas:

As the Chairman of a large hotel chain, deployment of technologies such as broadband service to handle high-speed data, video and interactive media are of great importance to my business. Allowing Verizon into the long distance business will provide the impetus for more investment in the telecommunications and Internet backbone for all regions of Massachusetts.

The current restrictions that keep Verizon from offering these services stifle competition and growth in the Internet – from local connections to the Internet backbone. Once allowed to offer a full range of services, competitors like Verizon will rapidly expand investment in network facilities designed to serve all customers in all areas of the state, resulting in speed and quality that is dramatically improved. Without companies to provide real competition in the high-speed data backbone market, the Internet is actually becoming more concentrated and less competitive.

Meanwhile, Verizon, the one company that could change this competitive picture remains in a regulatory straight jacket, apparently in the belief that many customers and all long distance companies require continued protection of the federal government. In the hospitality industry, competition has always benefited our clients with a variety of choices and fair prices determined by the market not by regulation. It's time that the FCC moves to relieve Verizon of this restraint and enable telecommunications consumers to profit from the benefits of an open market.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Saunders, Chairman

GLS:sds

cc: Senator Kennedy
Senator Kerry
Representative Moakley

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18 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116-3201



Massachusetts Rural Development Council, Inc.

406 Goodell Building DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

University of Massachusetts

Amherst, MA 01003

Phone: 413-545-9595 FAX: 413-545-1795

Web page: <http://www.mrdc.org>

Directors:

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President

Carl Allen
Vice-President

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Cathleen McElligott

Robert J. Rizzo

John Schoenbaum

Matthew Vanderhoop

Joseph Zukowski

Executive Director:
Thomas M. Guerino

October 12, 2000

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

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OCT 16 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: CC Docket No. CC-00-176
Application by Verizon for Authorization Under Section 271
To Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas,

The Massachusetts Rural Development Council is a public-private sector partnership aimed at creating development opportunities for our rural residents. We are dedicated to improving the quality of life in rural Massachusetts, while preserving the characteristics that give rural communities their unique sense of place. It is on this basis that we support Verizon's long distance application.

Throughout Massachusetts, rural communities increasingly depend on communications technology. In no small part, the rise of the Internet has made rural communities attractive to individuals and companies looking to live and work in areas with high quality of life. For our schools, technology has become a great equalizer in terms of providing access to resources normally available exclusively in urban areas.

New products, services and network investments are making the Internet faster and easier to use. Further growth in technology and availability will help make rural areas even more attractive for economic development. While efforts like Berkshire Connect and Cape Cod Connect have succeeded in bringing further competition to rural areas of Massachusetts, we need to provide the right incentives for more investment throughout all areas of Massachusetts.

More Internet backbone hubs are needed for rural consumers to take advantage of high speed Internet access. Where there is no nearby hub, the cost of reaching the Internet can be very high, service can be slow and affordable high-speed access is unlikely.

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Meanwhile, the one company that could change this picture remains on the sidelines. With the ability to provide all services across its network, Verizon will have the economic incentives to increase bandwidth, maximize Internet speed and increase the deployment of the most advanced services.

Verizon's ability to provide long distance and Internet backbone services will promote competition, increase network investment and spur more consumer choice. In the end, this will mean economic opportunities for all, not just a privileged few.

It's the right time to let the carrier that has invested the most in rural Massachusetts leverage that network for the residents of this state. Please approve Verizon's long distance application as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Guerino", written over a horizontal line.

Thomas M. Guerino,
Executive Director

the **october** co., inc.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

51 Ferry St., Box 71, Easthampton, MA 01027-0071
 413-527-9380 1-800-628-9346 FAX: 413-527-0091

October 11, 2000

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Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
 Office of the Secretary
 Federal Communications Commission
 445 12th Street SW, Room CY-B402
 Washington DC 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: CC Docket No. CC-00-176
 Application by Verizon for Authorization under Section 271
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Dear Ms. Salas,

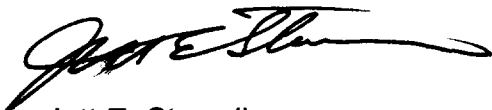
Over the past 40 years, we have worked to develop a continually growing manufacturing company in western Massachusetts. We produce furniture components that are sold to the major furniture manufacturers throughout North America.

As we have grown, so has our need for effective telephone services. We now buy a combination of local, long distance, Internet and wireless services from multiple vendors, including Verizon.

As a business owner and consumer, I support Verizon in their efforts to provide all of the above service in a single package. While we are continually approached by vendors of different communication services, we would like to improve and simplify our lives with one vendor is able to meet our needs.

Verizon has always treated us fairly over the years and I believe they should be permitted to expand the communications services offered to allow for long distance, Internet and data communications across North America.

Sincerely,



Jett E. Stowell
 Vice President

JES:pb

No. of Copies rec'd 041
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

REP. VINNY DEMACEDO

1ST PLYMOUTH DISTRICT
73 MOUNTAIN HILL ROAD
PLYMOUTH, MA 02360
TEL. (508) 224-7572

ROOM 443, STATE HOUSE
TEL. (617) 722-2460
FAX (617) 722-2897

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OCT 16 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Committees:
Commerce and Labor
Taxation
Energy

LAURIE KLOTZBACH
LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

Magali Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-B-204
Washington, DC 20554

Re: CC Docket No.: 00-176, Application by Verizon for Authorization Under
Section 271 to Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts.

Dear Ms. Salas:

As a Massachusetts state legislator who appreciates the importance of stimulating the economy and of providing consumers with affordable alternatives in the marketplace, I am pleased to submit this letter in support of a measure that will do both: Verizon's application to provide long distance service in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

My understanding is that Verizon has thoroughly opened its local network to competition in Massachusetts and that scores of competitive local exchange carriers are serving customers from facilities housed inside Verizon central offices. In keeping with the provisions of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, fairness calls for Verizon to be allowed to provide long distance service in return.

Please include this letter of support for Verizon's application in the record to be considered in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vinny deMacedo".

Vinny deMacedo
State Representative
1st Plymouth District

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011

October 11, 2000

Magli Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-B-204
Washington, DC 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: CC Docket No. 00-176, Application by Verizon for Authorization Under
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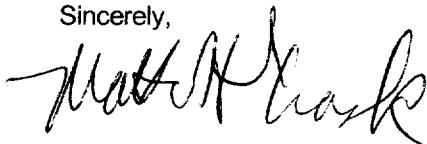
Dear Ms. Salas:

As CEO of a growing software and telecommunications company and as chairman of the Cape Cod Technology Council, I have a keen appreciation of measures that stimulate the economy while also providing consumers with marketplace alternatives. With this in mind, I am pleased to submit this letter in support of a measure that promises to do both: Verizon's application to provide long distance service in Massachusetts.

My understanding is that Verizon has opened its local network to competition in Massachusetts and that scores of competitive local exchange carriers are serving customers from facilities housed inside Verizon central offices. The provisions of the 1996 Telecommunications Act thus call for allowing Verizon to provide long distance service here in Massachusetts.

Competition is an important factor in creating and maintaining a vibrant economy and I believe Verizon has demonstrated that it deserves to be allowed to participate in the Massachusetts long distance market. Please convey this expression of support to the Commission.

Sincerely,



Matthew H. Trask
President and CEO

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SPRINGFIELD BILINGUAL VETERAN'S OUTREACH CENTER

P.O. BOX 70185 - 233 FRANKLIN STREET

SPRINGFIELD, MA 01107-0185

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TEL: (413) 731-0194
Executive Director
Gumersindo Gomez

FAX: (413) 736-2008
President
Heriberto Colon Jr.

P.R.V.A.

October 10, 2000

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

RE: CC Docket No. CC-00-176
Application by Verizon for Authorization under Section 271
To Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas:

On behalf of the Puerto Rican Veterans Association of Massachusetts Inc., I wish to endorse Verizon's long distance application in Massachusetts.

As the Commonwealth's only Puerto Rican Veterans Organization serving the state's largest population of Latinos, our mission is to provide comprehensive and culturally responsive services that promote the general well being of Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking people. In addition, we advocate for and represent the interests of Puerto Ricans as well as other Spanish-speaking citizens before political bodies.

With more than 200,000 residents of Puerto Rican heritage living in Massachusetts, this state has strong economic, social and community ties to Puerto Rico. Many residents stay in constant contact with friends and family back on the Island of Puerto Rico, which makes them very significant users of long distance telephone services.

Adding Verizon as a choice as a long distance carrier in Massachusetts will benefit many Hispanic consumers. From what we've observed firsthand in New York, consumers have reaped substantial cost savings after Verizon entered the market.

I urge you to fully endorse Verizon's long distance application, so consumers in Massachusetts can enjoy the same benefits.

Sincerely,

Gumersindo Gomez
Executive Director

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Cc: Massachusetts Congressional Delegation

" IF YOU ARE FREE, THANK A VETERAN"



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October 11, 2000

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW, Room CY-B402
Washington DC 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: CC Docket No. CC-00-176
Application by Verizon for Authorization under Section 271
To Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas,

We are a growing manufacturing company in western Massachusetts producing metallic laminates that sold throughout the world. Communications in an international marketing effort are extremely important to our continued success.

We believe that choices of providers are necessary to assure that we are best served in our communications needs. Verizon and their predecessor, Bell Atlantic, have consistently provided high quality service at reasonable rates.

We support Verizon's entry into the competition for long distance services and see multiple benefits for Massachusetts industries and for the consumer. The added competition will encourage the communications industry to deliver the best services and develop the best solutions at competitive prices.

We look forward to the day when we have more choices with real competition for our local, long distance, Internet and data communications needs. The consistent efforts of Verizon to provide better products and service has earned them the right to enter the long distance market as a new competitor.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Fondakowski
Vice President

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04/1



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TOWN OF BRAINTREE
ONE JFK MEMORIAL DRIVE
BRAINTREE, MASSACHUSETTS 02184
TELEPHONE: 781-794-8110 FAX: 781-794-8128

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

October 12, 2000

Magali Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-B-204
Washington, DC 20554

Re: CC Docket No.: 00-176, Application by Verizon for Authorization Under Section 271 to Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas:

As a public official concerned with fostering the economic well being of my town and state, and encouraging competitive options available to our residents, I enthusiastically support Verizon's application to provide long distance service in Massachusetts.

Time and time again, I have been impressed with Verizon's responsiveness in providing local telecommunications service to the town government and to the people we serve. I am confident that the same will be true in the long distance market if the FCC rules favorably on the company's application.

While good corporate citizenship may not be a formal factor in the Commission's deliberation on this matter, I must include a positive reference to the manner in which Verizon and its employees contribute to the social fabric of our region. Verizon is not simply a company doing business in our community – Verizon is an integral part of our community.

Kindly include this expression of support for Verizon as part of the record to be considered by the Commission in this application.

Sincerely,

James E. Sullivan
James E. Sullivan
Selectman

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DIANE
DAVIS
ASSOCIATES

Bayberry Hill
60 Dinsmore Avenue, Suite 420
Framingham, MA 01702
TEL: 508-879-2309
FAX: 508-879-2337
Email: prdda@aol.com

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

October 11, 2000

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. CC-00-176 Application by Verizon for Authorization Under
Section 271 to Provide Long Distance Service in Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Salas:

I am pleased to support Verizon's petition to provide long distance service from several perspectives. As the owner of my own business and a member of the Women's Advisory Group of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, I know that small businesses throughout the state want choices and simplicity, so they can focus on serving their customers. As a consumer who has heard rave reviews from my sister on Verizon's long distance services in New York, I want to have access to the same low rates and be able to choose a company I know and trust.

I believe that Verizon's entry into the long distance business will add a level of service and quality that will benefit all consumers. Small businesses will be able to group all of their telecommunications needs together with one company. This makes it much easier to do business and creates more of an incentive for the companies to develop offerings that meet the needs of the small business market. In addition, there will be more competition among the telephone companies to offer the best packages.

Consumers will experience similar benefits from Verizon's ability to offer them full-service options. They want to do business with one company that provides simple choices to meet their individual needs. They also want the reasonably priced options that will result from more players in the market seeking their business.

I can see only positive outcomes in Massachusetts from the approval of Verizon's request to add long distance. I encourage you to support this effort in the interests of all telephone customers in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Diane G. Davis

cc: Senator Kennedy
Senator Kerry
Congressman Moakley

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**UNITED
SENIORS
HEALTH
COOPERATIVE**

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OCT 16 2000

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

October 16, 2000

Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-B-204
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: CC Docket No. 00-176
Application by Verizon for Authorization Under Section 271 to Provide Long
Distance Service In Massachusetts**

Dear Ms. Salas:

The United Seniors Health Cooperative, the National Hispanic Council on Aging and the National Council on Aging welcome the opportunity to submit comments in support of Verizon's filing requesting FCC authorization to provide in-region, interLATA services in Massachusetts. We believe that Verizon's entry into the long distance market in the state of Massachusetts will benefit all consumers, especially seniors, by opening the marketplace to true local, long distance and data services competition.

The vision of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was to promote choice and competition in the telecommunications industry. Verizon's entry into the long distance market will be another positive step in that direction. We appreciate the New York model, where Verizon's entry into long distance increased competition in both local *and* long distance telephone service markets. Older consumers in Massachusetts deserve to have multiple choices for these services. With Verizon's entry, other competitors will accelerate their efforts to compete in the local market and to meet the challenges presented by a new major competitor for other telecommunications services.

Seniors, many of who are on fixed incomes and tight budgets, will greatly benefit from Verizon's entry into the Massachusetts market. This is evident by reviewing the new plans available in New York as a result of Verizon's entrance into the long distance market. Low volume users have benefited from Verizon's new 'no minimum' plans. As you know, millions of seniors have stayed on basic rate plans, usually the most expensive per minute long distance plans; many of these have monthly minimums. When Verizon entered New York, they introduced plans with no minimums and low per minute rates. They also introduced new services that allowed consumers to charge their phone bills to a credit card or pre-pay for their long distance. These two plans demonstrate that competition lowers prices and has led to the creation of innovative products for consumers.

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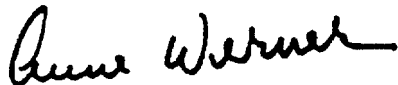
A not-for-profit organization of health care consumers helping people to achieve health, independence and financial security

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We also believe that increased competition in the local and long distance arena will force telecommunications providers to pay more attention to issues that concern seniors. In particular, our concerns focus on telecommunications fraud, specifically in the forms of cramming, slamming and criminal misrepresentation. In this area, we believe Verizon has a strong record.

We call upon the Commission to quickly approve Verizon's 271 application for the state of Massachusetts. Consumers deserve and demand the simplicity of choice, variety of services at affordable prices, and the commitment to serve the residential customer that Verizon has made as part of its 271 application.

Sincerely,



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Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

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OCT 16 2000

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

In the Matter of

Application by Verizon New England)	
Inc. for Authorization Under Section 271)	
of the Communications Act to Provide)	CC Docket No. 00-176
In-Region, InterLATA Service in the State)	
of Massachusetts)	

Comments of

World Institute on Disability
American Council of the Blind
Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc.
Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc.

October 16, 2000

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The undersigned organizations welcome the opportunity to submit comments in support of Verizon Communication's application to provide long distance service in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are confident that Verizon's entrance into the long distance market will enhance and extend its ability and commitment to making communications technologies available to consumers with disabilities.

I. Statement of Interest

World Institute on Disability (WID) is a private, nonprofit organization that serves as a research, training and public policy development center for the disability rights and independent living movements. Its board of directors and staff are predominately people with a wide variety of disabilities and its work focuses on policy areas that are critical to the integration of people with disabilities into society. WID's Division on Technology Policy serves as a resource for disability organizations and individual activists who believe that people with disabilities can be empowered through technology. Its work centers search for ways to remove and prevent barriers to such use in the design of technology.

American Council of the Blind (ACB) is the nation's leading membership organization of blind and visually impaired people. It was founded in 1961 and incorporated in the District of Columbia. The Council strives to improve the well-being of all blind and visually impaired people by: serving as a representative national organization of blind people; elevating the social, economic and cultural levels of blind people; improving educational and rehabilitation facilities and opportunities; cooperating with the public and private institutions and organizations concerned with blind services; encouraging and assisting all blind persons to develop their abilities; and conducting a public education program to promote greater understanding of blindness and the capabilities of blind people.

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc., (SHHH) founded in 1979, is a consumer, educational organization devoted to the welfare and interests of those who cannot hear well, their relatives and friends. SHHH has 12,000 national members and 9,000 chapter members in all 50 states. As the voice for hard of hearing people, SHHH strives to improve the quality of hard of hearing people's lives through education, advocacy and self help. SHHH impacts national policy for improved rights, services, research and public awareness.

Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI) is a national non-profit advocacy organization established in 1968 to promote full visual access for deaf, hard-of-hearing and speech-impaired constituencies to entertainment, information and telecommunications offerings in America. TDI promotes full visual access to these offerings through consumer education and involvement, technical assistance and consulting, application of existing and emerging technologies, networking and collaboration, uniformity of standards and national policy development and advocacy.

II. Comments

It has been four years since the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was passed. But, we have not yet achieved its goal of creating a competitive telecommunications world in which consumers benefit from lower prices, new offerings, increased customer service quality and the simplicity of one-stop shopping for communications needs.

In the long distance market, three companies, AT&T, WorldCom and Sprint continue to dominate 80 percent of the business. Over the past year, the successful entry into the long distance market by Bell Atlantic in New York and by SBC in Texas have demonstrated not only that there is a need for greater competition, but also that the Bell Operating Companies are fully capable of meeting the strict requirements for 271 approval. When Bell Atlantic signed up its one-millionth long distance customer earlier this year, it proved that consumers were responding to greater choice and lower rates in the marketplace.

Similarly, Verizon's filing for authorization to provide long distance service in the state of Massachusetts can only further a competitive environment and help us realize the vision of the 1996 Act.

In considering the merits of Verizon's petition, the FCC must consider a multitude of factors, including Verizon's success in opening its network for local competition through its completion of the 14-point checklist. The parties to this filing are not in a position to evaluate Verizon's success in this area. However, the Commission is also charged with assessing the public interest aspects of this filing, and in this area we do feel competent to offer an important perspective to the debate on this application.

Too often, companies in the rush to offer customers the latest, most exciting new telecommunications or Internet-based services have overlooked the needs of consumers who cannot see, hear, move or process information in the same way as the majority of the consumer market. Verizon has actively undertaken efforts to ensure that the needs of customers with disabilities are not consciously or unconsciously disregarded. Specifically, the company has proactively been involved in the following issues of the disability community:

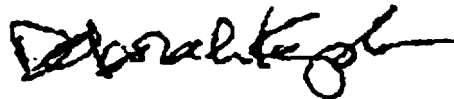
- Bell Atlantic was the first regional Bell company to implement 711 access throughout its service territory and undertook this effort at its own expense. Verizon is working to continue this commitment. It is cooperating with the local public service commissions and the dominant carriers in its GTE states to implement 711 as mandated by the FCC.
- Verizon offers accessible billing in Braille or large print formats in a majority of its service areas and is in the process of rolling out these alternative formats to those areas not yet covered. In addition, the company has been testing an accessible on-line billing option.
- Verizon has adopted as a best practice the Universal Design principles that commit the company to fostering accessibility company-wide and with the companies with which it does business.
- Verizon encourages internal examination of disability issues through its support of DIAL (Disability Issues Awareness Leaders), an employee resource group which advocates on behalf of employees and customers.
- Verizon has engaged in a continuous dialogue with national and local disability-related organizations. Verizon is a frequent sponsor of these organizations' national conferences and regional activities and includes representatives of the disability community on its local and regional consumer advisory boards. The National Association of the Deaf, one of the leading national disability organizations, recently honored Bell Atlantic, now Verizon, for its commitment to accessible communications.
- Verizon has committed to accessibility for its internal and external Web pages and has created specific pages that address the needs of customers with disabilities. The company has also offered packages of products and services specifically geared to the communities

of blind, deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. These include a Talking Caller-ID/home voice mail package and a Caller-ID/Call Waiting package featuring a flash-button-equipped Caller ID box that enables TTY users to switch between incoming calls.

No company is perfect in its efforts to ensure accessibility. But we recognize that Verizon is taking steps as a leader in the telecommunications industry in terms of accessibility issues. We are confident that Verizon's entrance into the long distance market in Massachusetts will enhance and extend its ability and commitment to making communications technologies available to consumers with disabilities.

We, therefore, recommend that the FCC approve Verizon's application to provide long distance service in the state of Massachusetts and welcome the participation of additional new competitors in the long distance market.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Kaplan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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